



MELIPHAGUS GULARIS: Gould.

J. Gould and H.C. Richter del. et lith.

Hallman del. & Walton Imp.

MELITHREPTUS GULARIS, *Gould.*

Black-throated Honey-eater.

Hematops gularis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 144; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

THIS species is very abundant in all parts of South Australia, where it inhabits the large *Eucalypti*. During my stay in Adelaide I frequently saw it on some of the high trees that had been allowed to remain by the sides of the streets in the middle of the city. From this locality it extends its range eastward to New South Wales, where it is much more rare, and where it can only be sought for with the certainty of finding it along the extreme limits of the colony towards the interior. I killed several specimens in the Upper Hunter district, and observed it to be tolerably numerous on the plains in the neighbourhood of the river Namoi, and that it breeds in all these countries is proved by my having killed the young in different stages of growth in all of them. In its habits and economy it differs considerably from the *Melithreptus validirostris*; for instance, I never saw it perch on the boles of the trees, as is usual with that species, neither is it so exclusively confined to the large trees. It is a very noisy bird, constantly uttering a loud harsh grating call while perched on the topmost dead or bare branch of a high tree; the call being as frequently uttered by the female as by the male. Like the *Melithreptus lunulatus*, it frequents the leafy branches, which it threads and creeps among with the greatest ease and dexterity, assuming in its progress a variety of graceful attitudes. Insects and the pollen of flowers being almost its sole food, those trees abounding with blossoms are visited by it in preference to others.

There is no variation in the colouring of the sexes, but there is a very considerable difference between the young and old birds, particularly in the colouring of the soft parts; the young are much less brilliant than the young of *M. validirostris*, in which the colouring of the soft parts far excels those of the adults.

With the nest and eggs of this species I am unacquainted; they are therefore desiderata to my cabinet, and would be thankfully received from any person resident in the colony where the bird is so common. That the nest will be cup-shaped in form, constructed of grasses, &c., and suspended by the rim to the smaller branches of the *Eucalypti*, and that the eggs will be two or three in number, there can be little doubt.

Crown of the head black, an occipital band of white terminating at each eye; ear-coverts and back of the neck black; back and rump golden olive; wings and tail brown; throat greyish white, with a central stripe of black; under surface greyish brown; bill black; feet and tarsi brownish orange; irides hazel; bare skin above the eye beautiful bluish green.

The young have the gape, lower mandible, and feet yellowish orange.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.